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Von D*  
204. (Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.

REMARKS

1. Claims 36, 38, 46, 48, 51, 55, 57-59, 61, 63, 71, 73, 76, 139, 141, 149, 151, 154, 158, 160-162, 165, 173, 175, 178, and 201-204 are amended. Claims 26-28, 31-35, 130, 131, 134-138, 192-200, 205, and 210 are allowed. Claims 26-28, 31-81, 130, 131, 134-183, 192-205, and 208-210 are pending in the application.
2. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 36, 38, 46, 48, 51, 55, 57-59, 61, 63, 71, 73, 76, 139, 141, 149, 151, 154, 158, 160-162, 165, 173, 175, 178, and 201-204 in which "indicium" is limited to "postage indicium" overcomes the drawing objections presented by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicants submit that the drawings do not need to be amended.
3. Claims 36, 38, 46, 48, 51, 55, 57-59, 61, 63, 71, 73, 76, 139, 141, 149, 151, 154, 158, 160-162, 165, 173, 175, 178, and 201-204 have been amended to add "postage" prior to "indicium" to overcome the informalities cited by the Examiner regarding a lack of antecedent basis in the specification for language contained in the claims as required by 37 CFR §1.75(d1). It is submitted that these rewritten claims also overcome the 35 USC §112, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph rejection cited by the Examiner, in that the specification provides the necessary support to the invention as claimed. The Examiner has indicated that these claims would be allowable in this form.

4. The 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejection over Perazza should be overcome by the claim amendments. Claims 36, 38, 46, 48, 51, 55, 57-59, 61, 63, 71, 73, 76, 139, 141, 149, 151, 154, 158, 160-162, 165, 173, 175, 178, and 201-204 have been amended to add "postage" prior to "indicium". This is not disclosed or suggested by Perazza. Perazza discloses an automated bill payment system that includes a means to read, store, transfer, and imprint identifying indicia regarding customer payment instructions (CPI). CPI documents are delivered to the bank, and are optically scanned to read the specific amount to be paid for the respective bills. Perazza does not disclose or suggest "postage" indicia as is claimed by Applicants. Therefore, claims 36-43, 45, 47-51, 53-59, 61-67, 69, 70, 72-76, 78-81, 139-146, 148, 150-154, 156-162, 164-170, 172, 174-178, 180-183, 208 and 209 are not anticipated by Perazza under 35 U.S.C. §102 (b).

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Person Making Deposit

Application No.: 08/973,293

**Marked Up Claim(s)**

36. (Twice Amended) [An] Postage indicium dispensing apparatus comprising;

a processor for creating [an] a postage indicium, said postage indicium including a proof of payment, for service by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount, said first party causing said transaction amount to be paid to a second party in response to at least said transactional data when said first party processes said postage indicium; and

an output for generating said postage indicium.

38. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

46. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

48. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

51. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

55. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a tangible medium.

57. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a mail piece.

58. (Twice Amended) [An] Postage indicium processing apparatus comprising:

a processor for processing at least one postage indicium including a proof of payment, for service by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount; and

an output responsive to at least said transactional data for causing said transaction amount to be paid to a second party when the postage indicium is processed.

59. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium appears on a mail piece.

61. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said processor includes a scanner for scanning at least part of said postage indicium.

63. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

71. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

73. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

76. (Twice Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

139. (Twice Amended) A method for dispensing payments comprising the steps of:

creating [an] a postage indicium, said postage indicium including, a proof of payment for service, by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount, said first party causing said transaction amount to be paid to a second party in response to at least said transactional data when said first party processes said postage indicium; and

generating said postage indicium.

141. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

149. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

151. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

154. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

158. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a tangible medium.

160. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein said postage indicium is generated onto a mailpiece.

161. (Twice Amended) A postage processing method comprising the steps of:

processing at least one postage indicium including a proof of payment, for service by a first party, and transactional data comprising at least information representative of a transaction amount; and

causing, in response to at least said transactional data, said transaction amount to be paid to a second party when the postage indicium is processed.

162. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium appears on a mail piece.

165. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said transactional data includes information concerning an originator of said postage indicium.

173. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium includes a digital signature for authenticating at least part of said postage indicium.

175. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium includes a human readable portion.

178. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein said postage indicium includes a machine readable portion.

201. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 36 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.

202. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 58 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.

203. (Amended) The method of claim 139 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.

204. (Amended) The method of claim 161 wherein the postage indicium includes a postage amount.